

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. – 14. (Canceled).

15. (Original) In a multi-CPU receiving node of a network, a method for routing a SCCP (Signaling Connection Control Part) message to a specific CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node, comprising:

applying a mathematical function to information received in said SCCP message to obtain a result, said information including a first value obtained in a first field of said SCCP message, said mathematical function ensuring that a load on any CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node differs by no more than 25% when sampled over a continuous 24-hour period from a load on any other CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node that is designated for load sharing SCCP message processing, said mathematical function further ensuring that messages belonging to a given SCCP message stream are routed to a single CPU of said multi-CPU receiving node; and

employing said result to route said SCCP message to said specific CPU.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said first value represents an OPC (Originating Point Code) value.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein said second value represents a Signaling Link Selection (SLS) value.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said mathematical function ensures that said load on said any CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node differs by no more than 5% when sampled over said continuous 24-hour period from said load on said any other CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node that is designated for said load sharing SCCP message processing.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said mathematical function ensures that said load on said any CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node differs by no more

than 2% when sampled over said continuous 24-hour period from said load on said any other CPU in said multi-CPU receiving node that is designated for said load sharing SCCP message processing.

20. – 25 (Canceled).